



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



BOWLING FOR THERAPY

The South Dakota Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL) recently donated \$4,200 to the VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS) for recreation therapy activities. \$2,100 was donated to the Fort Meade VA Medical Center and another \$2,100 was donated to the Hot Springs VA Medical Center.

The BVL has held a premiere position in support of recreation therapy for veterans since World War II. Last year the South Dakota BVL ranked the 5th highest in the nation for BVL donations to recreation therapy. Because of their high ranking, they were able to donate \$2,000 more to VA BHHCS this year than in past years.

Recreation therapy, designed to maintain or improve physical, mental and emotional well-being as well as reduce depression, stress and anxiety, has been the hallmark of BVL's programing. VA BHHCS recreation therapy department is thankful for the continued support of the South Dakota BVL.

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ESGR HONORS POLLARD

Aaron Pollard, Veterans Claims Supervisor for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, was recently honored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

This is the third time that Pollard has been presented the ESGR's "Patriot Award." General Bob Bray and General Ron Mielke made the presentation during the Sioux Falls VA's town hall meeting last week.

Recognizing supportive employers is vital to the ESGR's mission. They actively promote awards as a key element in further employer support, while strengthening relationships between service members and employers.

Congratulations Aaron!



VET CENTER IS MOVING

Effective February 1, The Sioux Falls Vet Center is moving to a new location - 3200 W. 49th Street (near the corner of 49th and Louise).

Office hours remain the same—8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday. The Vet Center is also open Tuesday evenings until 8:00 pm.

Phone and fax numbers remain the same—phone: 605-330-4552 or 877-927-8387 and Fax: 605-330-4554. The zip code will be 57106.



moving,
but not
too far

SD BISON SERVED AT INAUGURAL LUNCH

Monday's inauguration ceremonies for President Barack Obama had a bit of a South Dakota taste to them, starting with the Inaugural Luncheon. The main course was hickory grilled bison with wild huckleberry reduction.

It turns out that bison came from the Western Buffalo Company in Rapid City. Owner Bruce Anderson says he got a call two weeks ago letting him know his company's bison was on the menu. Anderson says, "It's great to find that your product is making its way into those situations. It's great for the local ranchers that raise buffalo. South Dakota is a big buffalo producing state. I think it's a bigger deal for them to know that this product got picked out of the other products to be at the luncheon."

When asked why buffalo would be picked, Anderson said because it has pizzazz, charisma and tastes great.



<http://www.westernbuffalocompany.com/>



Buffalo "What Americans Are Meant To Eat"

VETERANS TRIBUTE COMING TO HOT SPRINGS

Hot Springs, also known as “The Veterans Town” will play host to one of the largest mobile collections of military and emergency services tributes in the United States. It’s called the “American Veterans Traveling Tribute,” (AVTT) and it will be set up in Hot Springs the first week in August this summer.

AVTT Chief Executive Officer Kevin Weatherly was in Hot Springs last week to do some preliminary measurements for the display and a collection of volunteers is working on building the event. Much of the tribute will be set up in the parking lot adjacent to Centennial Park, although parts that need to be indoors will utilize the Mueller Civic Center. The centerpiece of the AVTT is an 80 per cent-size replica of the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, located in Washington, D.C.

There are also tributes to World War II and the Korean War, a panel of time lines for the Vietnam War and a tribute to the individuals from 9/11. Law enforcement, fire and other emergency personnel are also remembered.

Also coming to Hot Springs is the “Agent Orange Quilt of Tears” project and 28 quilt display, calling attention to the long-term effects that the chemical agent – utilized extensively during the Vietnam War – have had and continue to have on the servicemen who served.

The AVTT will arrive on July 31, with setup beginning Aug. 1. The display will remain through Sunday, Aug. 4, to coincide with the annual Fall River Freedom Ride, before being taken apart for a return trip to Sturgis for the 2013 rally.

With donations from the Hot Springs Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Hot Springs, Fall River County and the Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department, much of the cost of securing the ATVV has been covered. Additional fundraising is continuing for local individuals or businesses who want be a part of the event. The committee organizing the tribute is also seeking volunteers to assist with many different aspects, including setting up and tearing down the displays – both at the park and the Mueller Center – as well as many other small jobs that come with bringing something of this magnitude to the area.



FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION FOR VETERANS

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Programs offer free tax help for veterans.

The VITA Program generally offers free tax help to people who make \$51,000 or less and need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals in local communities. They can inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify such as Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations.

The TCE Program offers free tax help for all with priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement issues unique to seniors. IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

In addition to traditional face-to-face tax preparation, the IRS is offering a self-assistance service at many VITA and TCE locations. If individuals have a simple tax return and need a little help or do not have access to a computer, they can visit one of the participating tax preparation sites and an IRS-certified volunteer will guide them through the process. Find a VITA site near you at: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep>. The majority of the VITA and TCE sites are open annually from late January/early February to April 15.

To have your tax return(s) prepared at a VITA or TCE site you need to bring the following information with you:

- Proof of identification – Picture ID
 - Social Security Cards for you, your spouse and dependents or a Social Security Number verification letter issued by the Social Security Administration or
 - Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assignment letter for you, your spouse and dependents
 - Proof of foreign status, if applying for an ITIN
 - Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
 - Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc from all employers
 - Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
 - A copy of last year's federal and state returns if available
 - Proof of bank account routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit, such as a blank check
 - Total paid for daycare provider and the daycare provider's tax identifying number (the provider's Social Security Number or the provider's business Employer Identification Number) if appropriate
- For more information visit: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Military>



Upcoming Events

Feb. 4—VFW Legislative Reception
Feb. 5—American Legion Legislative Reception
Feb. 7—SDNG Legislative Dining Out
Feb. 8-10—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Cedar Shores in Oacoma
Feb 10—Four Chaplains Memorial Service—St Francis Assissi Church—Sturgis—1:30 pm
Feb. 9—SFVAHCS Valentines for Veterans Concert—Washington Pavilion—Sioux Falls, SD—3:00 pm
Feb. 16—SFVAHCS Variety Show—2:00 pm
Mar. 14—VABHHCS Veterans Creative Arts Show—Fort Meade
Apr. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
May 3-5—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
May 11—Yellow Ribbon for the 935th—Rapid City
May 19—Yellow Ribbon for the 927th—Sioux Falls
Jul. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Oct. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Dec. 15—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Black Hills National Cemetery—10:00 am

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